



America's First Choice

CONTACT

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to the 349th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base, California

February 2006

Tuskegee Airmen contributions enrich military history for us all

(Story begins on Page 6)



Some New Year's don'ts

Welcome to the February UTA! Well, here we are, already into the second month of 2006, and like many of you who made New Year Resolutions, I've taken some time to evaluate the progress I've made on mine. I think most of us make resolutions to rededicate ourselves to improving one or more areas of our lives. Personally, I set a few objectives in each of the areas that I want to focus on during the year, and I divide my efforts between: family, work and myself. Instead of trying to stick with a "Do" list this year (always difficult), I thought instead I'd work on this list of "Don'ts."

Don't ever waiver in honesty and integrity-for without them everything becomes meaningless.

Don't undermine your worth by comparing yourself with others. It is because we are different that each of us is special.

Don't set your goals by what others deem important. Only you know what is best for you.

Don't be afraid to admit you are less than perfect. It is the fragile thread that binds us to one another.

Don't forget, a person's greatest emotional need is to feel appreciated.

Don't give up when you have something to give. Nothing is over until you stop trying.

Don't take for granted the things closest to your heart. Without them, life can be meaningless.

Don't be afraid to learn. Knowledge is weightless, a treasure you can always carry easily.

Don't use time or words carelessly. Neither can be retrieved.

So how are you doing with your resolutions? Whether you're working on a "Do" or "Don't" resolution list, hang in there and stick with it. The rewards can be great.

February is Black History Month. From the American Revolution to today's Global War on Terrorism, African-Americans have proudly served with valor and distinction in every conflict throughout our nation's history. Let's take a look at just a few contributions:

During the American Revolution, roughly 7,000 African Americans served in the Continental Army. The first American to die was Crispus Attucks during the



by Col. Robert K. Millmann, Jr.
Wing Vice Commander

famous Boston Massacre. This massacre inflamed public opinion throughout the colonies, leading to war, the Declaration of Independence, and eventual freedom from British control.

More than 200,000 African-Americans served and more than 38,000 died during the Civil War. The valor and effectiveness of these men in the final year of the war was so stunning that Abraham Lincoln was compelled to say they were the decisive factor in victory. Twenty-two earned the Medal of Honor.

During the Indian Wars from 1866 to 1890, the famous "Buffalo Soldiers" protected settlers from marauders. They played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Western U.S. Territories.

(See Millmann on Page 4)

Is faith for sissies, or essential to your personal journey?

by Chaplain (Col.) Neal F. McBride
349th Air Mobility Wing

"Faith is for sissies," the old master sergeant sneered. "Only weaklings put any stock in faith or religion." "You're wrong," the young Airman whispered to herself as she returned to her duties.

Is she wrong? If you watch much TV or read the newspapers on a regular basis it is easy to conclude our society thinks faith and spiritual matters are unimportant or not essential to living a productive life. Faith is optional. It is merely one "crutch" among many that people lean on, people who cannot stand on their own two feet.

Many people disagree with such thinking and contend that religious faith is a real dynamic in our lives, an innate dimension within every human. Blaise Pascal, the 17th Century French mathematician and philosopher, said, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled

by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator." Even so, it is easy for people to reject God and attempt to fill the void with things such as fame, money, friends, power, position, or possessions. In doing so, they cannot reap the benefits offered to them by practicing a genuine faith in God.

Okay, but what is "genuine faith?" Is it an irrational leap in the dark? No, true faith involves intellectual and emotional choices. It encompasses both our thinking as well as our feelings. Everyone exercises faith at some level; faith is part of being human.

At the most basic level, we all trust (a good synonym for faith) in something: our leaders, our family, our wealth, our possessions, or if nothing else, ourselves. Religious faith, on the other hand, places trust in God. It is a source of inner strength, a foundation upon which to base decisions, a compass to guide one's life. It's realizing that you cannot control everything. It requires depending on divine guidance and purpose. Putting faith in God is an act of your will, mind, body, and emotions.

Likewise, faith is a personal journey. No one is obligated or forced to participate. Faith is attitude, conviction, and conduct based on a right relationship with God. It is not static, but grows in strength and depth as we cultivate a relationship with our Creator throughout our lives.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) offers us insight into faith when he said, "To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible."

In the Air Force, faith is a personal choice and practice. We are free to embrace or reject faith. Even so, many Airmen realize that possessing and practicing religious faith is indispensable in dealing with the many personal and military challenges they face. Faith becomes a primary weapon or tool they utilize in their daily lives.

So, is faith for sissies? Is the sergeant right? Only you can decide. Speaking for myself, I am willing to defy the sergeant's categorization and declare my faith in God.



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Freedom is something you have to want for yourself. It is something you have to define for yourself -- this freedom is not without price.

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Memorabilia compilation: In honor of African-American History, this month's cover is a compilation of Tuskegee Airmen memorabilia. See the article starting on Page 6 for the story about how five of the original Tuskegee Airmen visited with military personnel deployed to Balad Air Base, Iraq, and how that visit and their legendary stories affected these men and their commitment toward today's military.

Humble beginnings

February is the birth month of two great human beings who changed our worlds forever for the good; Abraham Lincoln born February 20, 1809 and Frederick Douglass, February 20, 1895. Both humble in beginnings and living on through their great works; both demonstrating that no matter what life deals, you can make a difference. Read on the poetry inspired by their impact yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Abraham Lincoln by Berton Bellis
Down thru endless ages,
Came a soul from others apart—
Incased in a body of awkward appearance;

But in a true heavenly made heart.
He was born in a hewed log cabin,
Grew up simple and plain;
This life—on earth a sacrifice,
To remove from liberty a stain.
No pen can give him due credit—
No words the good of his mind;
But his love is forever burning,
In the hearts of all human kind.
The world now bows to his honor,

*And hail this emancipator' name;
Columbia is proud of his memory,
He lives in everlasting fame.
His life of bitter sorrow,
Hard work and saddened tears,
Has made happy millions of humans,
And will for the future years.
O, Father, hear us in heaven!
May his reward increase ten-fold!
To repay for the great good he did us,
While his clay on earth lies cold.
His life is a lesson for the living,
Shows democracy is strength and sand,
That a good mind no matter how humble,
Can spread peace and love o'er the land.*

*"In God we trust"—our nation all—
Our reward was grand and kind,
For we'll always live and never fall!
By following this wonderful mind.*

Frederick Douglass by Robert Hayden
When it is finally ours, this freedom,
this liberty, this beautiful and terrible thing,
needful to man as air, usable as earth;
when it belongs at last to all, when



**By Command Chief Master Sgt.
Patricia A. Thornton**

it is truly instinct, brain matter, diastole, systole, reflex action; when it is finally won; when it is more than the gaudy mumbo jumbo of politicians: this man, this Douglass, this former slave, this Negro beaten to his knees, exiled, visioning a world where none is lonely, none hunted, alien, this man, superb in love and logic, this man shall be remembered. Oh, not with statues' rhetoric, not with legends and poems and wreaths of bronze alone, but with the lives grown out of his life, the lives fleshing his dream of the beautiful, needful thing.

Millmann...

(Continued from Page 2)

African-Americans assisted Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders with the charge up San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War. Five earned the Medal of Honor.

During World War I, about 367,000 African-Americans served and 100,000 fought in France. The famed 93rd Division earned numerous awards for valor.

More than one million served during World War II. In the opening hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor, perhaps no one displayed greater resolve than young Dorrie Miller, a sailor on the *USS Arizona*. Despite no training, at incredible risk, and later injuries to himself, manned a machine gun and downed four Japanese war planes, while ignoring being strafed and bombs exploding around him.

The accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen are well documented in the journals of WW II history. This decorated squadron never lost an escorted bomber.

And, Let's not forget the famed segregated unit of "Triple Nickel" paratroopers who were assigned to

dangerous "fire jumping" duty, in the Western United States.

During the Korean War, 3,100 African Americans lost their lives. Just seventeen days after communist soldiers invaded the Korean peninsula, the men of the all-Black 24th Infantry reached Korea from Japan, and immediately began a dramatic series of battles, forcing North Korean invaders back in one strategic defeat after another. In July 1950, the 24th Infantry, at the battle of Yech'on, earned the first U.S. victory of the war.

In Vietnam, one of every four combat troops was African-American. The first Congressional Medal of Honor recipient was Milton Oliver who selflessly gave his life to save his buddies by throwing himself on a grenade. He was 19 years old.

More than 104,000 African-Americans served in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. I was privileged to have served under a personnel hero of mine, General Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981 in 1954, setting in motion the process resulting in the formal end of segregation of the U.S. military. It

was the right thing to do.

The significant contributions of all men and women in uniform continue in today's Global War on Terrorism.

Technology, training and an unparalleled strength through diversity are why, I believe, this country has the best military in the world. We all celebrate Black History Month with pride and gratitude to the heroes, past and present.

Congratulations to Col. Thomas Linster, who retired as the 349th Maintenance Group commander after 39 years of distinguished and devoted service to our country.

We thank Colonel Linster for his superior leadership and steady hand while guiding the "Best Maintainers" in the United States Air Force. On behalf of all of us in the 349th AMW, I wish you and Nancy a long and happy retirement. You will both be missed.

For the rest of us, it's back to work. Good luck with your resolutions. Be safe out there --our country needs your continued efforts.

Thanks again for everything you do on a daily basis to keep America free.

I'm proud to serve with you all.

Nomination season opens for top Reserve employer awards

by Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

Guard and Reserve members may recommend their employers to be recognized for supporting their military service with the 2006 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards nomination season open.

The nomination season ends Feb. 28.

During last year's open season, there were 1,492 employers nominated for the prestigious Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve award. Fifteen winning employers were honored at a ceremony last October.

To make a recommendation, Guard and Reserve members must answer 10 questions about support they receive from their employer. Questions target pay policies, benefits and leave policies, previous ESGR awards, supervisor training, ESGR advocacy, servicemember recognition, family support, deployed member support, hiring preferences and general military support, said ESGR spokesman Tom Bullock.

The nomination form is posted on the ESGR web site, www.esgr.org.

The 55 ESGR field committees will review all nominations and verify the employer information received through the

web site. The ESGR National Ombudsman Team will then investigate all the nominations to ensure employers comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

Up to 15 2006 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards will be presented here on Sept. 19, Mr. Bullock said.

The Freedom Award is the highest in a series of Defense Department employer awards that include the Patriot Award, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Above and Beyond Award and the Pro Patria Award.

Winners "set a high standard for all America's private and public employers," said David Janes, national chairman of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve in July.

The companies were selected based on

support for the Guard and Reserve at the five-star level, which designates that they are strong advocates for the reserve components and role models for other companies.

"I cannot think of a better measure of the leadership and patriotism of a business organization than to be recognized for outstanding Employer Support to the Guard and Reserve," said Army Secretary Francis J. Harvey, keynote speaker at the 2005 awards ceremony in October. "And even more telling is that since the nomination has to be initiated by a Guard or Reserve member or family member employed by the company, it is truly driven from the bottom up."

The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award was initiated in 1996 to publicly recognize American employers who provide exceptional

support to their employees who voluntarily serve the nation in the National Guard and Reserve who voluntarily answer the call to duty, Mr. Harvey said.

Other ESGR awards also recognize employer support for

their Guard and Reserve members and can be presented directly by the employee or an ESGR field committee member. Details about these awards are posted on the ESGR Web site



a variety of factors — from providing pay differentials to extending health care, dental and life insurance coverage during employees' military mobilization, officials said. All have signed statements of

New civilian personnel training postponed until review complete

by Gerry Gilmore

American Forces Press Service

National Security Personnel System training for Department of Defense managers and rank-and-file employees is being postponed while a component of the new system is reviewed, an NSPS official said.

"We've asked the services to put a hold on their training for January because we're reviewing and assessing the performance-management design (portion), which is part of the training," NSPS spokeswoman

Joyce Frank said.

She said the changes will be made before the NSPS training is conducted. She couldn't say when the training,

originally slated to start this month, would be rescheduled.

DOD and the Office of Personnel Management are partnering to establish the NSPS pay-for-performance system to replace old civil service rules that rewarded employees for length-of-service rather than performance. More than 650,000 DOD civilian employees are slated to come under NSPS.

It's important that NSPS is "simple, clear and understandable" to DOD's managers and employees, Ms. Frank said.

Ms. Frank said the changes involve the pay-for-performance component of the system.

"We're redoing the way that we assess employees' performance, and pay is tied to that system," Ms. Frank said. "And so we've decided to make some adjustments to the design that we have. That will cause us to change our training as well."

NSPS Highlights include:

- Simplified pay banding structure, allowing flexibility in assigning work
- Pay increases based on performance rather than longevity
- A performance management system that requires supervisors to set clear expectations and employees to be accountable
- Streamlined and more responsive hiring processes
- More efficient, faster procedures for addressing disciplinary and performance problems, while protecting employee due process rights
- A labor relations system that recognizes our national security mission (our need to act swiftly to execute our mission), while respecting collective bargaining rights of employees



Seasoned Tuskegee Airmen bring legacy,

Story and photo by Capt. Andra Higgs
4th Air Force Public Affairs

The visit by five original Tuskegee Airmen to Balad Air Base, Iraq, had a direct impact on Staff Sgt. Wilsondo Alteus, 332nd Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility.

"I was planning to get out of the Air Force as soon as I got back," said Sergeant Alteus, teary eyed while standing on the dusty base wearing a desert camouflage flack jacket and Kevlar helmet. "But when they (Tuskegee Airmen) started talking about legacy and commitment, it really had a deep, deep impact with me and I believe it's changed my mind. I now see how I can further apply this to my military career and personal life. No matter what your background is – black, green, blue, red or white – what they said applies to you."

The achievements of original Tuskegee Airmen are slipping by like vapor trails across the sky. The best and worst of times have mostly come and gone for nearly 13,000 men and women of the 1940s "Tuskegee Experience." Some estimate there are approximately 500 surviving original Airmen. Their legacy, however, seems entrenched among current personnel.

"We brought original Tuskegee Airmen to Balad," said Brig. Gen. Frank Gorenc, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing commander, "because it's very important to hear these stories from these gentlemen and understand our roots."

The years of social and institutional doubt were shot out of the sky in part by Tuskegee Airmen's 992 pilots during World War II. For naysayers who continued to forecast underachievement by members of the then-332nd Fighter Group, an impeccable organizational record of aerial achievement made it clear there was no rain left in those prejudicial clouds. Sunshine had come for black aviators.

"The path ahead was cleared, in large part, the day that Eleanor Roosevelt climbed into an aircraft with Chief Alfred Anderson," said Lt. Col. (ret.) Lee Archer, one of the original Airmen on the trip, referring to the enlisted pilot who was one of the first black aviators in America. He would teach most of the original Airmen to fly. He was, that day, instructed by Secret Service agents to only take a 10-minute loop around the airfield and land. After take off, Mrs. Roosevelt asked Chief Anderson if the plane could fly to

Mobile, Ala.

"An hour and a half later, the plane came putt-puttin' back as the Secret Service was in the university chancellor's office arguing about who was going to call the President and inform him that his wife had flown away in an aircraft with a black man, was lost and apparently dead," he said, chuckling in recollection.

With that flight, wintry years of discontent had given way to a blossoming spring of opportunity for a group of Airmen.

"Imagine being an ace, as Lt. Col. Archer was in World War II, and coming off the boat in Richmond, Va., to be greeted by a sign that said 'coloreds this way and whites that way' – kind of makes me squeamish and it should make everybody that way," said General Gorenc at a dinner attended by more than 500 military personnel in one of the base's dining facilities. "As leaders in today's Air Force, we have a responsibility to create an environment where everyone – regardless of race, creed or gender – whether they are in Generation X, Y or Z – can succeed."

Defeating racism and the notion people held that they wouldn't go far, the Tuskegee Airmen applied power in and out of uniform – some, for example, into successful careers that included medicine, public office, airline pilots, entrepreneurs, professionals – with an intent to only do the best job they could. Together still by way of 49 chapters of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (www.tuskegeeairmen.org) and remembering the times they've known as a catalyst toward serving educational interests of today's youth, the five original Airmen on this Operation Iraqi Freedom mission focused on the morale of American service personnel in the global war on terrorism.

"When people ask why we (Tuskegee Airmen) went to Iraq and Kuwait, it was to visit the troops and to thank them for the work they are doing for our country and the world," said Colonel Archer. In the Home Box Office movie that depicts the Airmen's story, actor Laurence Fishburne played Colonel Archer, whom later went on to a successful career in corporate America.

"When I was these kids age and we were serving in North Africa, I remember Lena Horne coming to visit us. It made a difference to us then that someone would come over from home to say that we were doing a good job and for us to hang in there.

We owe it to these young men and women to do the same," he said.

Getting the Tuskegee Airmen to Iraq included a mobility process that determined availability of individuals to get to Dover Air Force Base, Del., for a C-5 mission flown by reservists from that base's 512th Airlift Wing. With military records in tow, the five received shots, protective gear and deployment briefings before departing for Ramstein AB, Germany. While there, the group visited with Airmen and armed forces personnel recovering from war injuries at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Darryl Fitzgerald, a 23-year veteran and native of Macon, Ga., was recuperating at Landstuhl from injuries to his head, face, torso and leg as a result of an encounter with an IED. He'd been airlifted there from Balad.

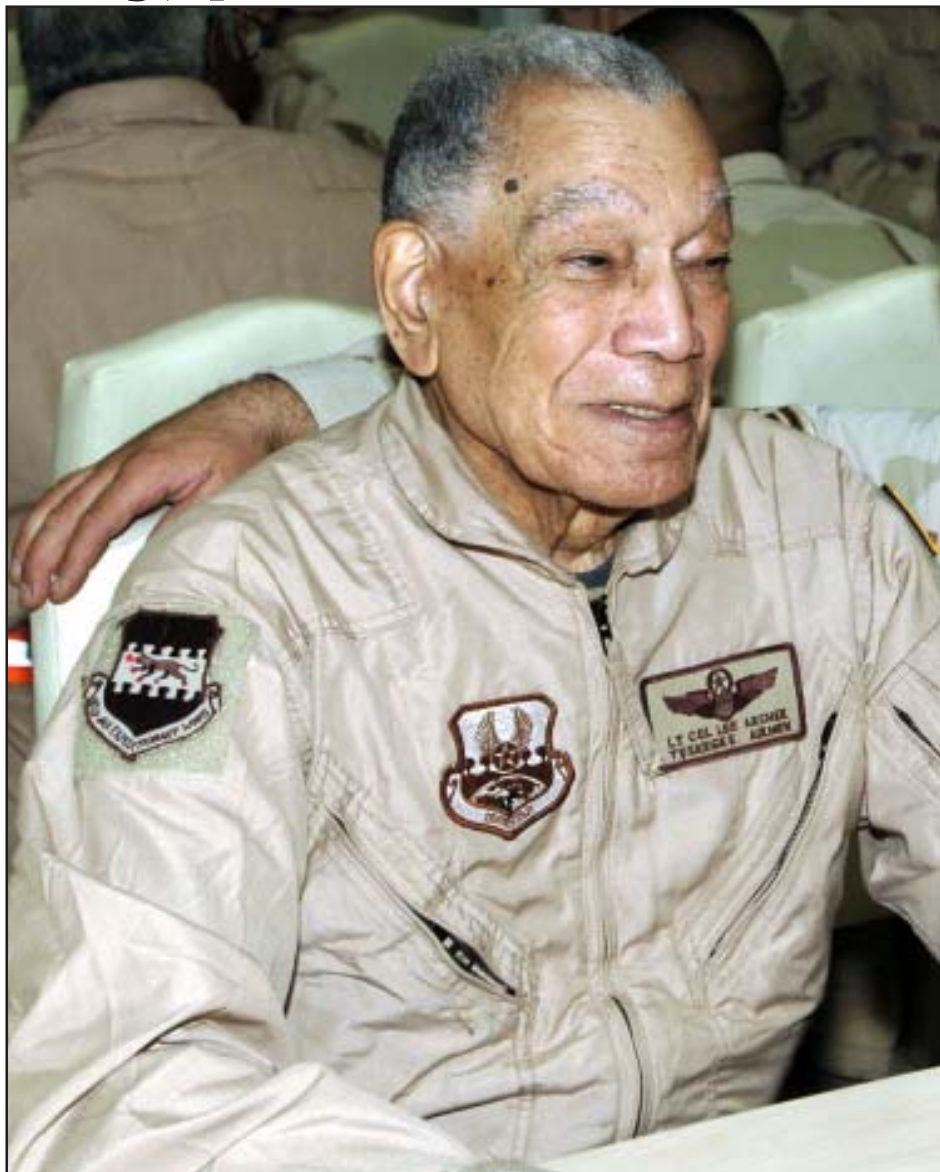
"Before this, I had never spent a day in the hospital – for *nothing*," said Sergeant Fitzgerald. He is married and concerned about shooting hoops in the future with his teenage son. "The doctor said he needs to amputate my big toe to prevent infection and to quicken my healing process." His soldier's resolve kicked in. "It's going to be hard, a little different, but I'm ready to move on with it."

Landstuhl is an Army-run medical facility with a customer base of more than 500,000 people. It is a primary-care facility for European commands and an evacuation and treatment center for Central Command, according to its mission documents. The nearly 2,500 workers there have treated nearly 27,500 personnel with battle injuries.

Sergeant Fitzgerald's spirits perked, his posture straightened, to the extent possible, on the hospital bed with his lower right leg anchored with bolts and 12-inch metal rods, upon receiving word that the Tuskegee Airmen were nearing his room. The 'ARMY' letters across the chest of his grey T-shirt stood out slightly more. With pain from fresh battlefield wounds, he extended his palm, made contact with an original Airman, Technical Sgt. George Watson Sr. barked the words "Sir, it's an honor to meet you," and at that moment, a drum roll of patriotic dialogue began among a new band of brothers.

"I thought I was a tough guy," said Colonel Archer, 85, his voice resonating with a heavy mid-town, short-dog-can-o'-whoop-ass New York accent. A decorated wartime

history, pride to current heroes in Iraq



Legend and Hero: Lt. Col. Lee A. Archer offers counsel to young Airmen in Iraq. He is namesake for the local Lee A. Archer Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen at Travis AFB, Calif.

aviator, the steely eyed, razor-sharp minded pilot is credited with shooting down five German jets during WW II, three on one mission. Archer was also knighted by the French government and was once commander of Orly Air Force Base in Paris. “My eyes welled up when I realized the extent of some of the injuries to troops we visited at the hospital. But I said to them, sometimes it’s just the luck of the draw and you’ve gotta hang in there.”

Similar to the rolling hills that surround the Kaiserslautern military complex that includes Ramstein and Landstuhl, the Airmen, like the recovering troops, at times had years that were lush and green and adverse times, like Sergeant Fitzgerald’s

roommate, Army Spc. Terrance Watson, when one had to live on hope alone. He is recovering from head wounds received as result of an IED. Temporarily unable to speak because of a tracheotomy tube in his throat, a medical staffer noted that his progress has been remarkable. He’d just climbed back into his bed after a walk through the ward’s corridor. Medical staff said that he’ll talk as soon as the tube is removed and was being transferred within days back to the U.S. for further care. Communicating by notepad, he wrote: “I’ve never been so helpless in my life.”

Lt. Col. (ret.) Robert Ashby, 80, distinguishing his elegant demeanor with a ruby-red Tuskegee blazer, leaned with the

consoling presence of a grandfather into the soldier’s space across the chrome bed rail and with hands clasped in a manner of grace, spoke words tempered with a lifetime of wisdom: “Son, with the grace of God, this, too, shall pass.”

Within moments, Colonel Ashby’s subtle, quiet conversation yielded a big smile from Specialist Watson, revealing 32 pearly whites and also wire holding his mending jaw bone. Before departing, the soldier wrote another note. “When I get home, I’m going to open a private school. And, when I get back, I’m going to complete my master’s degree. I want to give back.”

“Young man,” Colonel Ashby said, “you’re a real hero and I look forward to witnessing your success.” Colonel Ashby was one of the country’s first African-American commercial airline 747 instructor pilots.

Back across the military complex, at a Ramstein dining facility, scores of young Airmen lingered well beyond their lunch hour to talk with the five Tuskegee Airmen. Some Airmen – first term and career blue-suitors – strained from the far end of their tables to catch what words they could. Others simply pulled their chairs around, jamming the aisles to get within earshot. The fire marshal wouldn’t have stood a chance that day.

“I just couldn’t miss this,” said Senior Airman Edwin Juleus, 86th Maintenance Squadron. Two months earlier he had been a finalist for the Senior Master Sgt. Frances Barbour Award at the Tuskegee Airman, Inc., national convention in Orlando, Fla. The award is given annually to an airman who exhibits leadership and makes vital contributions to the community and mission. Airman Juleus recently completed his master’s degree. He also shelled out the dough to fly his wife and two children to Florida for the week-long event – what he called “a life-changing experience.”

“I even went home to shower before coming here to the dining hall,” he said, donning a fresh set of BDUs, “because I was out on the flightline and pretty grimy.”

Master Sgt. Jeremiah Lewis, from United States Air Forces Europe’s A-7 directorate, was there with his wife, Tanaya, who took time from work to attend. Sergeant Lewis, camera in tow, said: “I had to be here. I am taking pictures and will make a scrapbook so

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Tuskegee Airmen...

(Continued from Page 7)

that my grandchildren will know I was here today with these original Tuskegee Airmen.”

At the maintenance complex that straddles the base’s flight line, Master Sgt. (ret.) James Sheppard, 84, got pep in his step when he entered a building and eyeballed a jet engine being repaired. The Harlem, N.Y., native is a master mechanic, certified FAA inspector and pilot who recently flew his private aircraft at the Oshkosh, Wis., air show. He was already a certified aviation mechanic before he voluntarily enlisted in the Army Air Corp in 1941. He spoke passionately about his background and gave advice to the troops.

“I started building model airplanes when I was 11 years old,” Sergeant Sheppard said, deliberately and in a dialect as familiar to New England as the changing color of leaves in late October. He now resides in South Portland, Maine. “If I could give you one piece of advice,” he said, speaking to jet-engine mechanics, “get your certifications while you are still in service. You should get your A&P (airframe and power plant) licenses and get as much schooling as possible.”

The C-17 flight to Balad, flown by a Mississippi Air National Guard crew, included an assault landing onto this joint-service installation. It was buzzing with activity. Trucks, cars, buses, smoke, fire, armored vehicles, alarms, mortars—all happening 24-hours-a-day; this is the fog of war. The massive base is rimmed on its horizon with palm and palmetto trees. One of the first stops for the Tuskegee Airmen on the base was the medical facility. There, they encountered coalition medical professionals, injured Iraqis and foreign nationals.

“The number of people who come in with blast trauma and multiple injuries is the single most chilling aspect of what you see here,” said Dr. (Col.) Elisha Powell, commander, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group and the Air Force Theater Hospital, during a briefing to the Tuskegee Airmen. “We try to send our doctors to the War Surgery Course before they get here because of the level of trauma. We tell wings to send their A-team - their best here - because it’s no place for the B- and C-team to practice.”

The facility has 50 holding beds, expandable to 100, 18 intensive-care beds and six operating tables. The complex, currently housed in a series of nearly 40

tents, is due for a \$1.2 million upgrade slated for completion in 2006. The facility and its staff were put to the test Sept. 29, 2005. That was the day when two massive car bombs exploded in the city of Balad. There were 36 critical patients in need of immediate care with more than 100 others badly injured. Army helicopters carrying the injured were stacked in the sky above the hospital’s landing pad.

“That was the worse day and the best day here,” Dr. Powell said. “It was the worse day because we had to concern ourselves with running out of supplies and things like oxygen. It was the best day because we saved all their lives.”

According to Dr. Powell, an orthopedic surgeon, the volume and level of trauma seen here is more than any level-one trauma facility in North America, noting that if injured troops can get to this complex which treats about 350 critically injured patients a month “then you have a 96 percent chance to survive.” Still, he clearly agonized over having to amputate the leg of a special-forces soldier, a measure that saved the young man’s life.

“He received great care before he got here from his buddies,” the doctor said. “The gun shot wound had damaged his arteries and his blood pressure dropped to zero several times during the surgery. Still, if he’d gotten here sooner, we could have saved his leg. Everyone around here knew I was pretty broken up about that one.”

Taking a step back to regain his composure, the doctor continued his orientation. “The key to this facility working is through-put,” Dr. Powell said. “The average stay for patients here is between two and 36 hours. We’ve had people here as few as 30 minutes before the patient was stabilized and rolled right out the operating room and onto an aircraft. And, with pressure bags, they are off to the next level of care and family, friends and loved ones.”

With that, an alarm sounded. An Army Blackhawk was hovering overhead. As the medical staff dashed out the door to receive a wounded troop, the five Tuskegee Airmen trotted out as well. They were receiving a massive, first-hand dose of what this level of care looks like in a war zone.

“When I get home, I’ll tell folks how much support our professionals give to our troops,” said Col. (ret.) Richard Toliver, as he thanked an injured Iraqi policeman for his contributions in the struggle to bring

democracy to the region. He’d been shot. His buddy in the bed next to him had been badly burned.

“It’s clear for some folks, this care makes all the difference in the world,” said Colonel Toliver, who was a Top-Gun F-15 pilot during his career. He now actively lobbies Congress for airpower and troop benefits.

Where the successes of the World War II-era 332nd Fighter Group and current 332nd AEW compare is in their respective escort missions. In the 1940s, the original Airmen are renowned for not losing a single bomber aircraft under its escort to enemy fire. The 332nd AEW has taken on a mission that traditionally has been an Army task – escorting convoys. With a special emphasis on placing new armor on more than 7,000 vehicles, the wing has not lost a single person on one of its convoy missions.

A New York Air National Guard crew flew the Airmen from Europe aboard a C-5 aircraft. Back at Dover, AFB, Col. Jeff Rutland, 512th Airlift Wing commander presided at an enlistment ceremony there.

“It’s important to realize that no matter what side of the ocean you’re on, we’re all in this together,” said Colonel Toliver, 67, prior to giving an oath of enlistment. “Sixty years ago, the original airmen looked like these gentlemen, the original Airmen. They had more hair, they were a little younger and they had real teeth. Now, the Tuskegee Airmen in Balad and throughout the Air Force are women and Asian and white and Latin American and black and every other ethnicity and they are doing a super job.”

For Technical Sgt. Gerry La Chance, who just completed 21-years of his career on active duty, his transition into the Air Force Reserve included a ceremony attended by more than 100 Total Force base personnel.

“It’s not often that you get a chance to meet the guys who have paved the path for you,” said Sergeant La Chance, a Lincoln, R.I., resident. He is joining the 512th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. “This rejuvenates my career. It’s not often that you get a chance to meet history.”

Back at Balad, at least one other Airman who is extending his career can look to this encounter with this group of five original Tuskegee troops as a source of motivation.

“These gentlemen came over to Iraq and put themselves in harm’s way in the middle of a battle,” said Sergeant Alteus. “There was something special about their journey and something spiritual about what they said. I get shivers thinking about meeting them. It’s had a profound impact on my life.”

Civil Engineer Squadron receives GPS Survey Equipment, training

by Master Sgt. Donald Mascardo
349th Civil Engineer Squadron

Over the holiday season, the 349th Civil Engineer Squadron was very privileged to have received one of the most modern and expensive gifts from the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command office of Civil Engineers. The valuable Global Positioning System Surveying Equipment can cost more than \$100,000. Because of its cost, even some private surveyors find it difficult to own this type of modern equipment.

What is GPS? Global Positioning System is a worldwide radio-navigation system formed from a constellation of 24 satellites and their ground stations.

GPS survey system uses these "man-made stars" as reference points to calculate positions accurate to a matter of meters. In fact, with advanced forms of GPS you can make measurements to better than a centimeter!



This modern equipment will enhance the 349th CES Engineering Section's capability to perform land surveying and mapping methods well into the 21st century. Certainly, this will propel the reservist to the same operational capability as our active duty partners.

In January some members from our unit along with our active duty counterparts attended a joint-training course on how to use the GPS equipment. The class was taught by a certified training instructor from the civilian manufacturing company and assisted by Technical Sgt. Michael R. McComas, Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the 60th CES Engineering and GeoBase Section.

Sergeant McComas has had extensive experience using this type of GPS equipment while recently deployed in Iraq. Sergeant McComas reiterated the importance of this valuable training and the continued partnership with our reserve squadron. The week long class was held at the Base Education Center, along with the 349th CES facility.

349th AES is hiring

The 349th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron is looking for energetic and dynamic people who want an exciting job in the United States Air Force Reserve.

Aeromedical Technicians and Flight Nurses provide care to wounded service members during air transportation.

Interesting in becoming a part of this awesome team? The 349th AES is now interviewing candidates for X4N0X1-Aeromedical Evacuation Technicians-point of contact is Master Sgt. Taylor Dowtin, (707) 424-3867; X46F3-Flight Nurses-contact Major Frank Santos, (707) 424-4059 and 4A0X1-Medical Administrative Personnel, contact Technical Sgt. Lenora Davis, (707) 424-4124.

349th Maintenance Group
Quarterly Award Winners for
1st Quarter 2006

Senior Noncommissioned Officer
Master Sgt. Timothy C. White,
349th Component Maintenance
Squadron

Noncommissioned Officer
Tech. Sgt. Mark C. Cordesw,
349th Aircraft Maintenance
Squadron
Airman

Senior Airman Claudia Lozano,
749th Aircraft Maintenance
Squadron

349th Air Mobility Wing Meetings and Events

Top 3 Council meeting begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Sierra Inn Dining Facility on Sunday of each scheduled UTA. (707) 424-3217.

Rising Six Council meeting begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Sierra Inn Dining Facility on Sunday of each scheduled UTA.

Operation Teddy Bear meeting begins at 1 p.m., on Sunday of each UTA in the 349th Headquarters Bldg. 112 Conference Room.

The 54th Annual **National Prayer Luncheon** "Blessed are Those who Lead with Faith" is on Feb. 7, at 11 a.m. at the Delta Breeze Club. The guest speaker will be Col. Timothy M. Zadalis, 60th Air Mobility Wing. Tickets are available now.

For additional information contact the base chapel,

Human Resource Development Council meeting begins at 2 p.m. on Saturday of A-Flight UTAs in the 349th Headquarters Bldg. 112 Conference Room and is followed by the HRDC subcommittee meeting for **Outreach and Community Relations** at 3 p.m. The HRDC subcommittee meeting for **Recognition** begins at 2 p.m. on Sunday of A-Flight UTAs in the 349th Headquarters Bldg. 112 Conference Room. The HRDC subcommittee meeting for **Retention and Recruiting** begins at 1 p.m. on Sunday of B-Flight and C-Flight UTAs in the 349th Maintenance Group Bldg. 31 Conference Room.

Secretary of the Air Force talks about more integrated operations in future

by 1st Lt. Elizabeth Culbertson
U.S. Air Forces in Europe

The secretary of the Air Force said the service is headed toward more integrated operations.

Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne stopped at this airlift base Dec. 23 after trips to bases in Southwest Asia and Germany. He talked about the importance of force integration, new weapons platforms and Air Force people.

"We used to talk about the future total force. I think we need to stop that. The total force is now," he said.

Secretary Wynne said he noticed during his trip that units of active duty, Guard and Reserve Airmen were fully integrated to complete the mission — whether at Balad Air Base in Iraq or at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany.

"It is an amalgamated force that we're fighting with today," he said. "It was hard to tell who was a reservist, who was an active and who was a National Guardsman."

The total force concept aims to tap into the inherent strength and experience of all three Air Force components to increase overall combat capability.

The secretary said Airmen have only to look to the new F-22A Raptor unit to see

the service's recognition of the importance of total force.

"It is truly an historic event that we are standing up our finest weapons system, the F-22A, in an associate Guard and active wing. This is where the Air Force is going ... and it's going there in a hurry," he said.

Secretary Wynne said the announcement that the F-22A achieved initial operational capability is the "end of a quest" lasting more than 20 years.

"This is a capstone moment, when we finally achieve stealth, speed and precision in one platform," he said.

The secretary also mentioned the next fighter platform, the Joint Strike Fighter.

"I want to make sure that (the F-22A) is available to our country until we get another fifth generation fighter — the Joint Strike Fighter — operationally ready," he said.

Secretary Wynne said no matter what platform it uses, the Air Force's greatest strength remains its Airmen.

"(The Air Force) has developed incredibly capable, innovative and, I would say, inquisitive Airmen," he said.

Secretary Wynne described Air Force maintainers in Iraq recruited to up-armor vehicles. Now, he said, the manufacturer sends these Airmen prototypes to

evaluate.

"The innovations that the Airmen bring are our single greatest accomplishment," he said.

Airmen are also functioning in an increasingly joint environment, the secretary said. They operate with the Navy, Army and Marine Corps in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

"This war is about a joint fight, more than anything else we have seen. It is a remarkable synergy. What Airmen bring to a joint fight is the unique capability and capacity to innovate and understand airpower," he said.

Secretary Wynne said in the coming year he hopes to see Airmen embrace the new Air Force mission statement and become more proficient at delivering sovereign options for America through air, space and cyberspace.

"What I want is to make sure that the Airmen are very knowledgeable and that they are accountable at the end of the day to do what they say and say what they do," he said. "Master that—become knowledgeable, provide your great innovative and creative ideas on behalf of the joint force and the joint fight, and America will be better off for it, and I think the world will be better off for it."

Military, civilian medals approved for relief efforts

The director of the Joint Staff has approved awarding the Humanitarian Service Medal and the Armed Forces Service Medal for U.S. military personnel; and the Armed Forces Civilian Service Medal for Defense Department civilians engaged in the relief efforts for hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

To qualify for the HSM, service members must have provided direct support to immediate relief operations for at least one day in the area of eligibility - east of and including Houston, Texas, designated as 96 degrees longitude, Alabama, Louisiana or Mississippi - from Aug. 29 to Oct. 13, 2005.

Service members eligible to receive the AFSM must have provided direct support to relief operations for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days in the continental United States from Aug. 27, 2005 to Feb. 27, 2006, minus the specific area and time-period used to qualify for the HSM.

If a member receives an HSM for Katrina relief operations, the member cannot receive a second HSM for Rita. The same applies for the AFSM; however, people who receive the HSM may later

qualify for the AFSM if their direct support does not include the dates and actions used in their qualifications for the HSM.

To qualify for the AFSM, civilians must have provided direct support to relief operations for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days in the same area of eligibility and period as the AFSM.

Eligible Air Force personnel must provide proof of entitlement to their servicing military personnel flight or civilian personnel office. Supporting documentation may consist of assignment orders, temporary duty orders or travel vouchers, a decoration citation, an enlisted or officer performance report reflecting participation, or other official documentation that verifies participation.

Any colonel in a command billet or civilian equivalent can approve the awarding of these medals if supporting documentation is not available.

Once verified, the servicing MPF will update individual records. For more information, contact the 349th MPF at (707) 424-2346 or the Civilian Personnel office at (707) 424-3067. (AFPN)

Freedom: Having the power to shape our future

by Staff Sgt. Thomas Brick
332nd Expeditionary Contracting Flight

Many would say freedom is yours at birth, that you are born free with the same rights everyone else has. The creator may have wanted it that way but reality is much different.

Freedom is something you have to want for yourself. It is something you have to define for yourself.

When we are born we are not free because we are so helpless and unable to do anything for ourselves. We are dependent on our parents for everything. This really isn't freedom because we depend on others for support and are unable to make decisions for ourselves.

As we begin progressing from adolescence into adults we start to learn what freedom is. It is when we start making decisions for ourselves; but, this freedom



"I love my freedom, which is why I joined the Air Force. I am happy to defend my freedoms and those of the American citizens. I am also happy to fight so people from other nations can enjoy the same freedoms we do."

***-- Staff Sgt. Thomas Brick,
332nd Expeditionary
Contracting Flight***

is not without price. This freedom comes with the cost of having to live with the consequences of each action we take and each word we utter.

To me freedom is a very precious and worthwhile state of being. Freedom is not just a label or a right that politicians tout on a stage in front of supporters. It is that state of control over your own destiny. That is why freedom is worth fighting for, worth dying for. Because it is so precious and fragile it must be defended and held tight from those who would take it away.

Many people take this for granted.

They walk through the streets, forests and mountains blissfully unaware of the fortune that our founding fathers have left for us.



Through the founding father's actions and steadfast persistence a nation was created that was unlike any other nation on Earth at the time or even now. The Republic they created stood for freedom and the right to find your own destiny.

The result of all this blood, sweat and tears is a nation that allows you to live your life according to your own desires. You can become a doctor, a lawyer, a writer, a scholar or whatever you wish to become.

I love my freedom, which is why I joined the Air Force. I am happy to defend my freedoms and those of the American citizens. I am also happy to fight so people from other nations can enjoy the same freedoms we do.

I invite everyone to think about what freedom is, what this powerful word means to them. Think long and hard on it, without bias or prejudice. Freedom is an extraordinary state of being. Cherish it.

photo by Technical Sgt. Gaylord (Jay) Jacobs,
749th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron



All in the family: Maj. Brian Henley, 79th Air Refueling Squadron (right), is happy to work along side his brother, Staff Sgt. Mark Henley, 749th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. Major Henley flies the KC-10 aircraft while Sergeant Henley is a KC-10 crewchief. Sergeant Henley's first TDY on the KC-10 was on a mission on which his brother was the aircraft commander.

2006 Reserve Pay for Four Drills

	Years of Service														
	<2	2	3	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26
O-8	1,102.80	1,138.92	1,162.88	1,169.60	1,199.48	1,249.48	1,261.08	1,308.56	1,322.16	1,363.04	1,422.16	1,476.72	1,513.16	1,513.16	1,513.16
O-7	916.36	958.92	978.64	994.28	1,022.64	1,050.60	1,083.00	1,115.32	1,147.72	1,249.48	1,335.44	1,335.44	1,335.44	1,335.44	1,342.20
O-6	679.20	746.16	795.12	795.12	798.12	832.36	836.88	836.88	884.44	968.52	1,017.88	1,067.20	1,095.28	1,123.68	1,178.84
O-5	566.20	637.82	682.00	690.28	717.80	734.32	770.56	797.16	831.48	884.08	909.08	933.84	961.92	961.92	961.92
O-4	488.52	565.52	603.24	611.68	646.68	684.24	730.96	767.44	792.72	807.24	815.68	815.68	815.68	815.68	815.68
O-3	429.52	486.92	525.56	573.00	600.40	630.52	650.04	682.12	698.76	698.76	698.76	698.76	698.76	698.76	698.76
O-2	371.08	422.68	486.80	503.24	513.60	513.60	513.60	513.60	513.60	513.60	513.60	513.60	513.60	513.60	513.60
O-1	322.16	335.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28	405.28
O-3E	-	-	-	573.00	600.40	630.52	650.04	682.12	709.12	724.60	745.72	745.72	745.72	745.72	745.72
O-2E	-	-	-	503.24	513.60	529.96	557.52	578.88	594.76	594.76	594.76	594.76	594.76	594.76	594.76
O-1E	-	-	-	405.28	432.84	448.80	465.16	481.24	503.24	503.24	503.24	503.24	503.24	503.24	503.24
E-9	-	-	-	-	-	-	536.28	548.44	563.76	581.80	599.92	629.04	653.64	679.60	719.20
E-8	-	-	-	-	-	439.00	458.44	470.44	484.84	500.44	528.60	542.88	567.16	580.64	613.80
E-7	305.16	333.08	345.84	362.76	375.92	398.60	411.32	424.04	446.72	458.08	468.84	475.44	497.68	512.08	548.48
E-6	263.96	290.40	303.24	315.68	328.68	358.00	369.40	382.04	393.16	397.08	399.80	399.80	399.80	399.80	399.80
E-5	241.88	258.04	270.48	283.28	303.16	320.28	332.88	336.88	336.88	336.88	336.88	336.88	336.88	336.88	336.88
E-4	221.72	233.08	245.68	258.12	269.12	269.12	269.12	269.12	269.12	269.12	269.12	269.12	269.12	269.12	269.12
E-3	200.16	212.76	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60	225.60
E-2	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32	190.32
E-1	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80	169.80

E-1 with less than four months: \$157.08

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Wing Spotlight

Name: Technical Sgt.
Eric Dennis
Squadron: 82nd Aerial
Port Squadron
Years in Reserve: 3
years (9 years active
duty)

**What is your job in
the squadron?** Assistant
Noncommissioned
Officer in Charge Aircraft
Services. Technical Sgt.
Dennis supervises
seven personnel who
load and unload cargo



photo by Master Sgt. Alexander V. Vidal,
82nd Aerial Port Squadron

from active duty and reserve aircraft. He also has the
collateral duty of vehicle recertification instructor, which
makes him responsible for training more than 170 unit
members.

How does your position affect the overall mission? It
provides the Air Force with well trained Airman who are able
to perform real world missions competently and safely.

What do you like best about the Reserve? Traveling
somewhere new every year and actually being a part of the
ongoing war on terrorism.

**What is the most meaningful thing you have been part
of as a reservist?** Training new personnel and seeing the
training have a positive effect on their career progression.